



# Weekly Health Tip:

## Home Food Safety 101

In honor of National Nutrition Month, we're giving you some food safety tips to "help keep the foods you eat safe and reduce your risk of foodborne illness. Each year, millions of people are sickened and thousands of people are hospitalized as a result of food poisoning.

Some people, including pregnant women, newborns, older adults and people with weakened immune systems have an increased risk for foodborne illness and should avoid eating certain foods. But when it comes to spoiled food or contamination of food with harmful bacteria, no one is safe from food poisoning. So stay savvy about home food safety with these basic steps:

### Keep It Clean

- Start with a clean kitchen. Clean surfaces and tidy utensils. Use separate sponges for cleaning counters and washing dishes.
- Wash your hands thoroughly in warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds before, after and during food preparation. This is especially important after handling raw meat or seafood.
- Clean fruits and vegetables prior to cutting. Bathe produce in cold water, gently scrub and rinse in a colander.

### Maintain Good Meat Safety

- Use one cutting board for meat and another for vegetables and other ingredients.
- Keep raw meat and seafood separate from other foods. Store meat on the bottom shelf or in the meat bin in your refrigerator. This will keep meat juices from dripping on other items.

- Thaw meat properly in the microwave or refrigerator. Never thaw frozen items by leaving them on the counter or soaking them in hot water.
- If your recipe requires marinating for more than a minute or two, put meat and marinade in a covered dish in the refrigerator.

### **Cook Foods to Proper Temperatures**

- Use a meat thermometer to ensure you cook meat, poultry, fish and seafood to proper temperatures.
- Whether you're boiling, poaching or frying eggs, yolks should be firm, not runny.
- Never eat raw eggs or anything with raw eggs in it. If a recipe calls for raw eggs, such as Caesar salad dressing, use a liquid pasteurized egg substitute.

### **Refrigerate Right Away**

- Refrigerate perishable foods and leftovers right away. Do not let them cool on the counter or sit out for more than two hours. Set your refrigerator at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or cooler. Check the temperature with a refrigerator thermometer.
- Label your leftovers with the date. Reheat leftovers to 165 degrees Fahrenheit. If you aren't sure whether a food has gone bad, throw it away.”

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US Department of Health and Human Services*